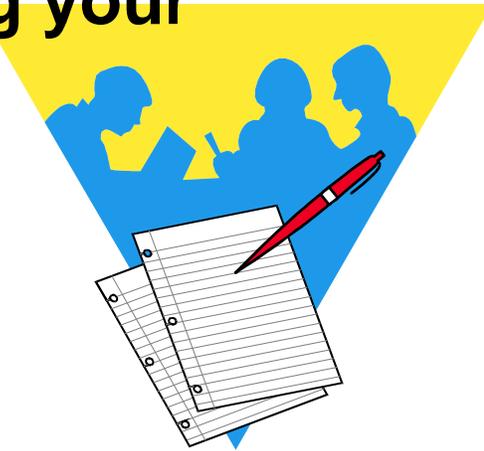


A Guide

For developing your
Individualized
Plan for
Employment

IPE



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The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Process...

Welcome to the most important part of your vocational rehabilitation planning. You are eligible for Division for Blind Services (DBS) services, and now we will work together to define your employment goal and the services you require to achieve that goal. This planning process is critical to your success. This guide will assist you in understanding the process and the information you will need to develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

What is the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?

The IPE is a plan for the services that you need to help you reach your employment goal. The IPE includes a description of:

- * Your employment goal

- * The steps (intermediate objectives) you will need to reach the goal
- * Services you will need to reach the goal
- * Who will arrange, purchase or provide the services
- * Your responsibilities in carrying out the plan
- * DBS responsibilities
- * Criteria for review of your plan
- * Understandings

The following people can help you develop all or part of your IPE:

- * Your DBS Counselor
- * Community programs and/or service providers

- * Family members and/or friends.

After you have completed your IPE, it must be reviewed and approved by your DBS Counselor. You and your DBS Counselor must sign the IPE before services begin.

Attached is an IPE development form that will guide you in developing your IPE.

Remember you can ask the Division for Blind Services for help at any time.

What services does DBS offer? Do I have to pay for these services?

DBS does not charge for services that you receive from staff members or services to decide if you are eligible. Other services that are at no cost to you include:

- * **Assessment** to help you determine your employment skills and your need

for services, such as training, assistive devices, etc.

- ✦ **Counseling and Guidance** to provide you with information about job and other services that will help you go to work.
- ✦ **Rehabilitation Teacher services** to help you live independently.
- ✦ **Referrals for other services** to help you succeed in getting a job.
- ✦ **Job Placement** to help you look for a job, find a job and stay on a job.
- ✦ **Transition Planning** to assist students completing school and preparing to enter employment.

You should ask your Counselor or other DBS staff if you have any questions about any of these services.

What services might I obtain elsewhere? Do I have to pay for these services?

The following services may involve some costs to you. DBS will need information about your finances to see if you will be able to pay for some or all of these services. You may have to provide information concerning your own finances, your spouse's or your parents' financial resources such as :

- * Check stubs
- * SSI/SSDI verification
- * Other resources (for example: savings accounts, tax returns).

If you are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or public assistance, you will not be expected to pay for any approved services. In some cases, this may also be true for people who receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). Please provide

any documentation you may have to your DBS Counselor to show that you have these benefits.

The following services may also be written into your IPE:

- ✦ **Training** such as educational and/or vocational training that will help you learn the skills to do a job (examples: college or trade school)

- ✦ **Support services** while you are training for your job including:
 - Transportation to and from training
 - Textbooks, tools and equipment
 - Reader services
 - Orientation and mobility instruction

- ✦ **Physical and mental restoration** are medical services that you may need before you work (example: low vision aids)

- ✧ **Assistance in starting a business** such as writing a business plan, buying equipment, stock and supplies.
- ✧ **Rehabilitation technology** aids and devices (examples: closed circuit TV, speech card for a PC).
- ✧ **Job coach services** that will assist you in learning a job after you begin work.
- ✧ **Post employment services** to assist you to keep, regain or advance in you job.

Will I need to apply for other financial benefits?

Yes, you may need to apply for other benefits before DBS can pay for services. These include any benefits provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits. They include such things as college financial aid

and medical insurance benefits, including Medicaid. You do not have to apply for other benefits if the delay would cause you extreme medical risk or you would lose a job opportunity because of the delay.

Your DBS Counselor can work with you to help you decide what other benefits must be used before DBS can pay for services.

Where do I get the services I need?

You can decide where you want to go for services you need to reach your employment goal. DBS can provide you with information about service providers.

When choosing your service provider, it is important that you compare the possible providers using the following criteria:

- * Does the service provider have all the required licenses and approvals?

- ✧ Does the service provider accept DBS standards and payment rates?
- ✧ Is the staff qualified to provide the training you need?
- ✧ Is the program/service accessible, considering your disability-related needs?
- ✧ Is there transportation to attend the service provider or program?
- ✧ If the provider is a school, do most of the students graduate or complete the training?
- ✧ Is the program successful in getting people jobs?
- ✧ Does the cost of the program seem reasonable when compared with the costs of similar programs?

Writing my IPE...

Attached is an IPE Development Form that will guide you in developing your IPE.

Part I: MY EMPLOYMENT GOAL

Choosing the right employment goal is perhaps the most important step you will take to succeed on the job. There are many resources that can help you make this decision. Your Counselor can work with you to develop a goal or help you locate these resources, if you wish.

When developing your goal, think about things like:

- * Does the employment goal meet my skills, abilities and interests?
- * How long will it take me to prepare for the goal? Is this reasonable?

- ✧ Will the job be available in my location, or will I need to travel or relocate?
- ✧ Will the salary and benefits meet my needs?

Because the Employment Goal is so important, you may want to have your Counselor review the goal with you before you continue with the rest of the form. In that way, you will know if there are any questions or comments and whether you are going in the right direction.

Part II: INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES (STEPS) I NEED TO COMPLETE TO REACH MY EMPLOYMENT GOAL

There are a number of steps you may need to take to reach your employment goal. Some examples might be to learn how to travel independently with the use of a long cane, to type 30 words per minute, or to get a college degree in computer science. Knowing the steps is important because it

assures that both you and your Counselor understand how you plan to get to your employment goal and how we can review your progress.

Please list the steps that you will need to take and explain how we will know when each step is completed. For instance, if you need to learn how to type, we will know you have reached that step when you receive a certificate of successfully completing the course. If you need to learn how to travel independently from your home to downtown or work, we will know you have reached that step when your orientation and mobility instructor reports that you have successfully performed that task without assistance.

PART III: SERVICES I NEED TO REACH MY EMPLOYMENT GOAL

When deciding on what services you will need, think about your employment goal and the steps you will need to take to reach that goal. Only those services that you will need to reach the employment goal will be approved.

DBS offers a wide range of services based on your own individual needs. Services may include interest and ability testing; counseling; referral; rehabilitation teacher services; employment assistance; training; treatment for physical/mental problems; transportation; reader services; orientation and mobility; rehabilitation center training; rehabilitation technology and other special equipment; personal assistance services (such as an attendant); supported employment; interpreter services; goods and supplies; and many more. We encourage you to talk to your Counselor if

you have any questions about the services we can provide and whether they are right for you.

How is the IPE approved?

After you complete your IPE planning, your DBS Counselor must review the plan and decide whether it can be approved.

Some of the things the DBS Counselor must consider include:

- * Is the goal consistent with your abilities, capabilities, and interests?
- * Are the services necessary to achieve your employment goals?
- * Will the services result in employment?
- * Are the services cost-effective? DBS may not pay for a high cost service or item, when a lower cost option is available that meets your needs.

If approved, your DBS Counselor will enter the information on the IPE form itself. You will be asked to read it through, make comments on the form, and sign the form. Services cannot begin until a signed copy is returned to the Counselor. DBS will not pay for services or equipment received before the IPE was approved and signed.

If your plan is not approved, your DBS Counselor will contact you and explain why. You may need to provide additional information or consider other employment goals or services.

If you disagree with DBS's decision not to approve your plan, you may request an appeal of that decision. The appeal can involve one or all of the following:

- * Meeting with your Counselor and/or Regional Director,
- * Mediation, or

✦ Impartial Hearing.

Your DBS Counselor can help you request an appeal. You may also request assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to help resolve any disagreements with DBS.

Remember you can ask DBS for help at any time.

DBS

Individualized Plan for Employment IPE DEVELOPMENT FORM

Directions

You may use this form to develop your IPE. The Guide for Developing Your IPE can help you. You can get help at any time from your Counselor. It is best if you complete Part I and have your Counselor approve your employment goal before you complete the rest of the form. Your DBS Counselor must review and approve your plan before any services begin. If your Counselor has any questions or concerns he/she will contact you. At any time you need more space please use additional pages.

Part I: My Employment Goal

My employment goal

is: _____

I want to be working by **(month, year)**: _____

Job duties for this type of work usually include: (For example: contact with public, writing reports, working with hands, driving, lifting, etc.)

I have the following **limitation(s)** because of my disability that may affect me on this job: (e.g., limited amount of standing; lifting; difficulty concentrating; unable to work with others)

The **educational background** I have that will help with my employment goal is:

I have **worked before** Yes:____ No:____

If yes:

Job:_____

What I did in this job:_____

Date: (start/end)_____

I left this job because: _____

Job:_____

What I did in this job:_____

Date: (start/end)_____

I left this job because: _____

Job: _____

What I did in this job: _____

Date: (start/end) _____

I left this job because: _____

Part II: Steps I Need to Complete to Do the Job...

Example:

Employment Goal: To be a computer programmer/systems analyst

For me to do this job I need to do these steps:

1. Complete a college degree in Computer Science.

I will know I have reached this step because:

I will receive a degree in Computer Science.

For me to do this job I need to do these **steps:**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

I will know I have finished each step because:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Part III: Services I Need to Reach My Employment Goal...

I need the following services to reach my employment goal:

1. Service: _____

I will get the service from: _____

Starting on: _____

Ending on: _____

Cost: _____

Other benefits: _____

2. Service: _____

I will get the service from: _____

Starting on: _____

Ending on: _____

Cost: _____

Other benefits: _____

3. Service: _____

I will get the service from: _____

Starting on: _____

Ending on: _____

Cost: _____

Other benefits: _____

Name: _____

Social Security Number: _ _ _ - _ - _ _ _

I did this form by myself Yes__ No__

If no, I received help from: name, address and telephone number of the individual(s) or organization(s).

(You do not have to share this information if you don't want to).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Give this plan to your DBS Counselor after you complete it, the address is: